

## **Idaho Charter School Leadership Council Agenda**

Northern Idaho – Coeur d’Alene – July 16 (2 – 5 p.m.)

Western Idaho Region – Boise – July 17 (9 a.m. – 12 p.m.)

Eastern Idaho Region – Idaho Falls – July 18 (2 – 5 p.m.)

**2 p.m.:**

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Individual School Leaders: Heads, Board Chairs, Business Managers, Parent and Teacher Representatives, State Department Representatives and Representatives of Charter Support Organizations

**2:15 – 2:30 p.m.:**

### **Opening Remarks: Growth and Quality in Idaho’s Charter Schools**

Overview:

- Idaho Charter Growth
- Idaho Charter Students
- Performance and Accountability
- Policy Environment
- Per Pupil Expenditure
- Public Opinion

Leadership for Growth:

- Context and Challenges
- School Leadership Council
- Charter Start!
- Charter School Quality Indicators

**2:30 – 3:30 p.m.:**

### **Session I: Promoting Growth and Quality**

Activity: Prioritizing Needs and Opportunities

Focus Action Plan: Research and Reflection

**3:30 – 4:30 p.m.:**

### **Session II: Charter School Messaging**

Messaging: Target Audience and Purpose

Activity: Concept Development

**5:30 p.m.:**

### **Directions and Next Steps**

## **Action Planning Idaho Charter School Leadership Council July 2007**

The Idaho Charter School Leadership Council met in June and July to develop a vision for *promoting growth and quality in Idaho's charter schools*. The Regional Council meetings included charter school heads, board chairs, business managers, parent and teacher representatives as well as State Department staff and representatives of charter support organizations like the Idaho Charter School Network.

School leaders focused on:

- Articulating needs and opportunities for promoting growth and quality
- Developing clear messaging regarding Idaho's charter schools

Council members in each region identified areas of expressed need (see *Action Plan: Prioritizing Opportunities*), then prioritized those areas of need, identifying possible solutions, challenges, success factors, as well as financial and resource implications.

Statewide priorities:

1. Provide more equitable funding (facilities, formula, transportation) for charter schools
2. Develop public awareness campaign
3. Promote growth and development of quality charter school programs in Idaho
4. Extend innovation to areas such as teacher certification and assessment
5. Streamline state/authorizer paperwork and reporting

Some areas of need are being addressed through collaborative efforts of SDE, ICSN, NWREL, IPCSC, ISBA, ICCSF: 1) authorizer roles and responsibilities, 2) technical assistance programming for start up charter schools, 3) development of charter school messaging campaign, 4) quality and accountability.

Expressed Need:	Proposed Solutions	Success Factors	Challenges/Barriers
<p><b>Equitable Funding/Facilities:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <b>facilities</b> – charter schools spend roughly 15% of operating funds on facilities needs; especially challenging – property, loans, construction costs (1)</li> <li>2) <b>funding formula</b> – charter schools that have small enrollment numbers and/or serve only elementary aged students don't have adequate funds for administrative demands—current formula based on needs of traditional school districts</li> <li>3) <b>transportation</b> – small student populations, large enrollment areas—current formula based on traditional local districts</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exempt charters from 2% set-aside requirement for facilities maintenance</li> <li>• Modify funding formula for charters to provide more equitable funding for smaller schools (Michigan solution)</li> <li>• Equalize M&amp;O monies—new formula for charters</li> <li>• Explore federal funding inequity more closely to determine new directions</li> <li>• Provide increased access to local tax \$\$\$. Allow public charter schools access to local funds through bonding arrangement with local district (Michigan).</li> <li>• Make surplus public property, school district property available to charter schools (2)</li> <li>• Provide state grants, equity funding, state loan programs for facilities; educate independent lenders</li> <li>• Promote business/charter school partnerships (3)</li> <li>• Charters network to increase buying power</li> <li>• Change transportation penalty with regard to large area/small number of students (provide 85% to charters as well)</li> </ul>	<p>Increased quality and academic success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an educational environment more conducive to learning</li> <li>• More \$\$ for professional development</li> <li>• More \$\$ for school programming, educational needs: equipment, materials</li> <li>• Administrative and Board time channeled to student educational needs</li> <li>• Entice more high quality teachers, reduce teacher turnover</li> <li>• Innovation extended to include a facility that supports the unique academic design of the charter</li> <li>• Offer expanded programming: electives, science lab, gymnasium</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for growth</li> <li>• Equitable use of local funds—equitable funds for all of Idaho's school children</li> <li>• More \$\$ for charter school transportation will provide more access for larger number of students</li> </ul>	<p>Perceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community awareness and support (start small and develop public education and support campaign before tackling larger issues)</li> <li>• Legislative awareness and support (begin conversations early)</li> <li>• Perception that charters are “taking \$\$ from districts”</li> </ul> <p>Limited public funds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of support from local school boards, superintendents</li> <li>• Reduce overall budget</li> </ul> <p>Require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High level of communication between charter schools</li> <li>• Political will</li> </ul>

(1) Idaho Fiscal Facts 2006 indicated that charter schools bring in \$638 less revenue per enrolled student.

(2) Laws in Alaska, Arizona, California, New Hampshire, New York, DOC, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Wyoming

(3) Laws in Utah, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, Ohio, New Mexico, Minnesota, Louisiana, Connecticut, Colorado, California

Expressed Need:	Proposed Solutions	Success Factors	Challenges/Barriers
<p><b>Public Awareness</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Nationally, less than 50% of Americans can accurately define charter school as a public school—charter leaders think the number in Idaho is even lower</li> <li>2. Many individuals have misconceptions, misunderstandings about charters that lead to a decrease in support and funding</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop clear messaging regarding Idaho charter schools</li> <li>• Communicate unique programming of each individual Idaho charter school</li> <li>• Model mini-classrooms at Center on the Grove</li> <li>• Publication like Philadelphia's which focuses on diversity and range of charter schools</li> <li>• Charter recognition program that recognizes 5 high performing charters that provide very different paradigms of education—and an accompanying media campaign</li> <li>• Bumper sticker competition incorporating concept statement: students, teachers, parents submit statements and winners are made into bumper stickers that are distributed</li> <li>• Develop community events, involve community in school: panels for portfolio review, judges, events</li> <li>• Contact key reporters in each region and establish a relationship</li> <li>• Attend regional administrator meetings to create relationships with other educational leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public awareness would increase interest in charter development</li> <li>• Public awareness would provide information to help parents make informed choices regarding their children's education</li> <li>• Address myths, build relationships—rather than advertise individual schools (where there are already long waiting lists)</li> <li>• Access sphere of influence</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for authentically experiencing a charter—rather than reading about it or hearing about it</li> <li>• Development of new charter schools</li> <li>• Raising of bar in public education generally</li> <li>• Legislation to support high performing schools</li> <li>• Focus on the child and the best education for each individual child</li> <li>• Networking and collaboration among all public schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a unified movement while retaining individuality</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Each school create clear messaging regarding its own individual mission, philosophy</li><li>• PR statewide or regionally</li></ul>		
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Expressed Need:	Proposed Solutions	Success Factors	Challenges/Barriers
<p><b>Growth and Development:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Demand for charter schools continues to grow—4600 children on waiting lists.</li> <li>2) Numbers of children in charter schools has grown (8900 in 06-07), but numbers of new charters has slowed (2 in 07-08)</li> <li>3) Many schools have reached capacity—penalty for growing over a certain number of students</li> <li>4) Some populations of students are not represented (nationally, charter schools serve a more diverse student population)</li> <li>5) Some regions of the state provide more options for students and parents</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lift the six/year charter cap restriction</li> <li>• Streamline the charter petitioning process</li> <li>• Legislation to allow businesses and universities to authorize charters</li> <li>• Legislation to allow spin off charter development</li> <li>• Established charters could mentor new charters i.e. Create RFP for “sister schools”—support groups of individual who are interested in developing a charter that follows a similar model</li> <li>• Promote charter conversion as a solution to underperforming schools</li> <li>• Provide state and foundation support for Charter Start! program currently developed by the SDE and the ICSN. The program will support new charters in pre-planning and first few years of operation—providing technical support</li> <li>• Increased awareness of requirements involved in starting charters</li> <li>• Release charter support program funds in planning years—establish benchmarks that coincide with Charter Start! training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater number of quality charter schools available</li> <li>• Increased number of charter schools that have demonstrated excellence in educational programming</li> <li>• Promote competition and improved performance in public education</li> <li>• Improved understanding of and perception of charter schools</li> <li>• Larger and more influential</li> <li>• Increase awareness of goals and purposes of charter schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of awareness of options</li> <li>• Research regarding quality programming options</li> <li>• Funding for mentoring (incentive)</li> <li>• Funding for start-up planning</li> <li>• Competition between schools (define commonalities, create understanding)</li> <li>• Increasing complexity of launching a charter school</li> </ul>

Expressed Need:	Proposed Solutions	Success Factors	Challenges/Barriers
<p><b>Teacher Certification and Assessment</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Charter schools, like small rural schools have struggled to find qualified teachers to teach a range of subjects.</li> <li>2. Specialists, for example in dance or mechanical engineering are required to have elementary or secondary certification.</li> <li>3. Qualified teachers have spent countless hours and dollars “jumping through hoops” in order to be certified. Very expensive for individual teachers</li> <li>4. Innovation in assessment tools is effective in other states for broadening the measures of a successful education: results based, growth based</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new recommendations by the State Board are promising</li> <li>• Expand assessment to include parent satisfaction, academic momentum, areas specific to individual charters i.e. leadership, etc.</li> <li>• Develop case-by-case method of evaluating teacher certification</li> <li>• Small school exception</li> <li>• Charter schools share resources, create a network (perhaps through ICSN) for schools to contact each other with regard to needs</li> <li>• Interface with university teacher education program</li> <li>• Charter schools create their own assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased ability to fulfill charter</li> <li>• Highly qualified teachers with passion, broad life experiences</li> <li>• Smaller schools can offer broader programming</li> <li>• \$\$ savings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Push to standardize all assessments</li> </ul>

Expressed Need:	Proposed Solutions	Success Factors	Challenges/Barriers
<p><b>Streamline State/Authorizer Paperwork and Reporting</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Charter school administrators (some who are part time) spend an inordinate amount of time processing paperwork that is handled by superintendents and district level support staff—either they spend a good deal of time outside the regular day processing paperwork—or they are unable to spend as much time in the classroom or with teachers</li> <li>2. Reports often ask for the same data in a different form</li> <li>3. Deadlines for data collection are not easy to access; SDE Data Acquisition Calendar includes all SDE dates</li> <li>4. Some reporting templates are difficult for first time users</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to consolidate reporting</li> <li>• Calendar of reporting dates for charter schools/monthly reminders</li> <li>• Provide separate test results: charters and district authorizers</li> <li>• Work with authorizers to recommend best practices for overseeing charters—common reporting practices</li> <li>• Provide more up-front hands-on support for new charters with regard to reporting requirements in all areas—be clear with regard to requirements, provide samples when possible</li> <li>• Provide Power Schools or SIS software to schools that missed the start-up funds</li> <li>• Provide tools, software to help with attendance, lottery, etc.</li> <li>• Develop a separate meeting from the superintendent’s meeting for charter heads—so that material provided can be more relevant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrators able to focus more on educational programming</li> <li>• More communication among various state entities</li> <li>• Provide more time for analysis of data, rather than mere reporting of data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less federal control</li> <li>• Established processes, procedures require time to refine and rethink</li> <li>• Staffing in various agencies</li> <li>• Federal timeline for reporting</li> </ul>



## **Charter School Messaging Concepts**

### **Charter School Leadership Council Regional Meetings**

#### **Southeast Idaho**

Charter schools:

- provide parents with the opportunity for innovative choices in their child's education
- offer quality education by maintaining smaller learning environments
- are exciting places to learn and to teach
- are accountable
- offer parents a strong voice in their children's education
- use innovative practices to achieve high academic standards
- strive to create a sense of community and belonging for each student
- offer a full and complete range of educational support services
- are responsive to individual student needs
- provide choice for all students
- are public schools that are free and open to all students

#### **Northern Idaho**

Charter schools:

- are public schools that are free and open to all students
- are innovative, creative retooling of public education
- support all students in achieving excellence
- provide smaller, more personalized learning communities
- offer a variety of educational choices—each offering its own specific, unique educational philosophy that guides its practice

#### **Southwestern Idaho**

Charter schools:

- provide a thoughtful education
- meet individual student needs while meeting state and federal standards
- are tuition free public schools
- provide quality options
- provide grassroots, local control to parents
- welcome partnerships and foster collaboration
- meet high standards and drive results
- promote high behavioral standards
- operate with open, transparent processes
- provide parents the power to design, choose and foster alternative educational options

After reviewing statewide concept statements, Melissa McGrath, SDE Public Information Officer suggested the following possibility for messaging: *Charter schools are free, public schools that are open to all students. A charter school gives parents the choice of sending their children to a school that uses innovative methods to provide a quality education in a smaller, more responsive learning environment.*